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UNCLAS VATICAN 004517

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (LEVIN); EUR/OHI (BRAUM); NEA/IAI; EUR/RPM
(TROUTMAN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL PHUM SOCI KIRF IS NL PHUM SOCI KIRF IS NL VT OSCE VTPREL OSCE](#)
SUBJECT: VATICAN HOLDS FIRM ON ADDING CHRISTIAN REFERENCE
TO OSCE PERSONAL REP'S TITLE

REFS: A) State 249144; B) Vatican 4441; C) MartinBrooks
11/26 telcons

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Holy See Deputy Foreign Minister Pietro Parolin told the Ambassador November 26 that the Vatican intended to continue pressing to add a reference to Christianity in the title of the proposed OSCE Special Representative on Tolerance and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Discrimination. Ambassador delivered ref (a) points, emphasizing that including anti-Christian discrimination in the representative's mandate would ensure sufficient attention to the problem. Parolin and OSCE Director Balestrero, however, affirmed the Vatican's support for a title with "a Particular Focus on Discrimination against Christians," rejecting even the possibility of a title "Including Discrimination against Christians." Although Parolin said the Vatican "would always consider all proposals," the Holy See feels that this is an issue on which it has to remain firm. End Summary.

Holy See: essay

2. (SBU) Holy See Deputy Signor Pietro Parolin November 26 to reiterate intention to press for and be adamant during the meeting would not accept anything to a "Particular Focus on Christians" in the Parolin and Balestrero's ref (b), stressing the serious nature of anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic problems in the OSCE region, only that there needed to be a focus on anti-Christian issues as well.

Ambassador Presses USG Position

3. (SBU) The Ambassador emphasized the points in ref (a), noting that adding Christianity to the representative's title could open the floodgates to group after group wanting similar inclusion. This could water down or render ineffective the entire endeavor, he said. The Ambassador pointed out that even if other groups did not jump on board, adding Christianity to the representative's title would imply that there are only three religions in the region deserving of OSCE attention, to say nothing of other non-religious groups. Including a reference to anti-Christian discrimination in the representative's mandate, the Ambassador concluded, would ensure that the problem receives appropriate attention.

Vatican Unrelenting

4. (SBU) Parolin and Balestrero remained firm on their points, with Balestrero becoming animated when speaking about the issue of balance and fairness. There are some smaller groups that could complain about not being included in the representative's title, Balestrero said. "But we're talking about Europe," where Christians make up a great percentage of the population. "If you're going to leave out a group that is facing discrimination, how can it be Christians," he asked. Balestrero noted that the Holy See remained in the background on many OSCE issues, realizing that on defense matters, for example, other delegations had more expertise and greater equities than the Vatican. But he insisted that the Holy See had to assert itself on a religious and human rights issue such as this. Otherwise, he implied, what was the point of its OSCE membership?

Searching for Flexibility

15. (SBU) While making clear that he was not negotiating the proposal's wording, the Ambassador probed the Holy See's flexibility on the issue, asking if, for example, the Vatican would accept a title "Including Discrimination against Christians." Balestrero flatly rejected the idea. Parolin, while initially backing up his colleague's view, added that the Holy See "would, of course, consider all proposals."

Comment

16. (SBU) The Holy See appeared unaware on the 26th of the possibility of EU movement in its direction as discussed with OSCE Vienna (ref c). We expect that the Vatican would become further emboldened if it saw support for its position growing within the EU. The fact that the normally reticent Vatican is pressing this issue so vigorously reflects the depth of its concern about what it perceives to be growing anti-Christian discrimination in Europe, as reflected in recent events including the rejection by the EU parliament of the Italian candidate for the EU Commission (ref b).

Nicholson

NOTE: SVC FOR GARBLED TEXT IN PARA 2.
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Holy See:essary

12. (SBU) Holy See Deputy Foreign Minister Pietro Parolin November 26 to reiterate his position that the Vatican would not accept anything to a "Particular Focus on Discrimination against Christians" in the title. Parolin and Balestrero, in ref (b), stressing the serious nature of anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic problems in the OSCE region, only that there needed to be a focus on anti-Christian issues as well.

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wanting similar inclusion. This could water down or render ineffective the entire endeavor, he said. The Ambassador pointed out that even if other groups did not jump on board, adding Christianity to the representative's title would imply that there are only three religions in the region deserving of OSCE attention, to say nothing of other non-religious groups. Including a reference to anti-Christian discrimination in the representative's mandate, the Ambassador concluded, would ensure that the problem receives appropriate attention.

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